



# MECA Matters

Metropolitan Emergency Communications Agency,  
Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

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## Radio Reprogramming: One More Time

### Unknown Facts:

MECA is a county agency that is governed by a five member Board of Directors. The members are: the Mayor of Indianapolis (or his proxy); the Marion County Sheriff (or his proxy); the Health and Hospital Corporation; a member selected by the Township Trustees; and a member selected by the excluded cities within Marion County.

Members include: Board President Mayor Joe Wright (Beech Grove), Public Safety Director Scott Newman, Deputy Chief Joe McAtee (MCSO), Chief Gerald George (Pike Fire Department), and Jessica Barth (Health and Hospital Corporation).

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The new digital radio system went live the summer of 2008, but MECA's customers felt the change long before the cutover date. The issuance of new radios, and programming of existing radios was a long and arduous, but necessary, task. At that time, all radios were programmed to operate on both the analog and digital system. Analog talkgroups were identified with an asterisk. When the cutover occurred, users were instructed to hit their home zones and to operate on talkgroups without the asterisk.

Prior to the radio programming, MECA met countless times with representatives from fire, law enforcement, and public service agencies to develop common radio templates.

When the system went live, we knew we would have to touch the radios another time to remove the analog talkgroups. Although the existence of these talkgroups do not hinder the

operation of the radios, removing these talkgroups increases the safety of the user by ensuring that they cannot accidentally try to talk on an analog talkgroup.

MECA has collaborated with the Fire community and modified their common fire template that will be programmed into the radios when the analog talkgroups are removed. This will include analog talk-around as a redundant means of communication during fires and incidents.

MECA has also begun collaborating with representatives from law enforcement to make modifications to the law enforcement templates. Some examples of changes being made are renaming Northeast to East District and the removal of the DT2 talkgroup.

It is anticipated that the Fire community will have radio programming completed first, while provid-

ing an opportunity to make other changes to the law enforcement templates. All changes, whether to fire or law enforcement, are being decided by the agencies themselves. MECA is a facilitator of these changes.

Programming will occur by Motorola at customer sites and may not require a visit to MECA. Melissa Serban, MECA's Customer Service and Project Manager will be leading this project and working with each agency to get scheduled for reprogramming. For questions relating to this reprogramming, contact Melissa Serban at 327.1471 or at [serban@indygov.org](mailto:serban@indygov.org).



IPS Officers Highbaugh and Northington doing a radio check.

## Fire House Alerting System: Go-Live

On Tuesday, June 2, MECA and its fire customers began the long anticipated and exciting cutover to the new Fire House Alerting System (FHAS). The cutover is scheduled to be complete by Thursday, June 4. At 7am on June 2, MECA staff, the FHAS vendor, and fire committee participants each broke off in four teams and began

working at different stations to connect the new system. Each station is taking approximately one hour to cutover. As soon as the station has been tested and approved by IFD's Jeff Taylor, that station immediately begins operating on the new FHAS.

The new FHAS, used in cities such as

Chicago, Dallas, Ft. Worth and Cleveland, provides stations with a myriad of new functions, including new alert tones. Firefighters will now be alerted with a new ramped heart-friendly tone for emergencies, which is easier on the firefighter's (continued on pg 2)



## Dispatch and MECA

People often confuse dispatch as being run by MECA, but in fact, MECA does not employ the dispatch center personnel. The Marion County Sheriff's Department oversees the 9-1-1 dispatch center, headed by Deputy Chief Joe McAtee. Chief McAtee and his personnel are responsible for dispatching law enforcement, and Sherry Taylor of IFD is responsible for managing the dispatching of fire and EMS runs.



Asst. Director of IFD Communications Jeff Taylor testing stations during cutover.

If you have a question regarding MECA or a story idea, please contact the MECA Matters editor, Melissa Serban at 317-327-1471 or [serban@indygov.org](mailto:serban@indygov.org).

## New MECA staff: Welcome!

MECA has recently undergone staffing changes and it is our pleasure to introduce you to some new, and newly promoted, employees.

Jim Cutrell, MECA's Planning and Training Coordinator was recently promoted to the Deputy Director of Administration position. Cutrell has 31 years of law enforcement experience. Cutrell was a police officer in Greenwood, attaining the rank of Assistant Chief. He was also the Johnson County Deputy Coroner, and the Director of Security at the IUPUI campus for the Convention Center and hotel.

Cutrell came to MECA in July of 2007 and can be reached at 327-5511.

Ashton Brandyberry is MECA's new CAD Administrator. Ashton has been with MECA in various positions, most recently as its Fleet and Facilities Coordinator. Brandyberry can be reached at 327-5522.

Tim Greenwalt has taken on the vacated position of Fleet and Facilities Coordinator and Jon Albright is the new Customer Service Coordinator.



From left, Jon Albright, Jim Cutrell, Ashton Brandyberry and Tim Greenwalt.

## What is the Future of VRMs?

In the Spring of 2009, Motorola stopped manufacturing and selling the current models of Vehicular Radio Modems (VRM) used by MECA customers. This decision was made based on a lack of suppliers for VRM components. Understandably, this caused concern for many agencies who have budgeted for additional VRMs or who are adding to their fleet or personnel. MECA and Motorola will continue to

service and support the VRMs that our customers have and use through 2012.

Many customers have asked how they can obtain VRMs at this time if Motorola is no longer selling them. One suggestion given by Motorola is for agencies to purchase reconditioned VRMs from agencies who have recently moved off the RDLAP platform.

Since the existing VRMs

are at their end of lifecycle, MECA also has begun researching future mobile data options. This project could be similar in size and scope as the digital radio project. For additional information, please contact Melissa Serban, MECA's Customer Service and Project Manager at 327-1471 or at [serban@indygov.org](mailto:serban@indygov.org).

## Fire House Alerting System: Con't

cardiovascular system. In addition, the system has the ability to dispatch multiple runs at the same time over the IP network. Dispatchers will no longer have to wait in queue to dispatch a run. For the 9-1-1 caller, dispatchers will now be able to maintain constant communications, rather than have the caller on standby while they dispatch the run. This is a great benefit to callers receiving emergency medical dispatch instructions.

This project finally came to fruition after a four year endeavor, thanks to Marion County firefighters.

As in the past, any problems associated with the FHAS should be reported to the MECA Customer Helpdesk at 327-7319, 24 hours a day.



Deputy Chief John Garino of Wayne Township Fire Department cutting over the first station to go live on the new Fire House Alerting System. Project Manager Greg Roembke assists in the background.